

March 13, 2007

To: Senate Highways & Transportation Committee

SENATE HIGHWAYS

EXHIBIT NO. 7

DATE 3-13-07

BILL NO. HB-332

Testimony supporting HB 332

Chairman Gerald Pease,  
Committee Members

The Great Falls Trail Bike Riders Association represents nearly 1000 riders from Great Falls and surrounding communities. These members ride off highway motorcycles and quadricycles (ATV's), collectively referred to as off highway vehicles or OHV's. As President of the group, I come before you asking for your support for this bill.

We believe the major loss of OHV opportunities on public land is attributable to sound, too much sound. We have worked through our State Association to promote the advantages of ethical use, respecting other uses on public land, as well as being a good steward of the land through volunteer trail projects and the Tread Lightly philosophy.

The message is getting out, but sound is still a major issue. That's why nine other states have adopted the 96dba sound limit. The National recognition of sound issue is changing. Sound can be addressed with an affordable, consistent, and effective testing method now readily available. These facts make this the right time for this legislation.

The Great Falls Trail Bike Riders Association has been actively involved in promoting quiet OHV use. In February of 1990 we worked with local dealers to promote quiet mufflers by offering discount coupons for quiet mufflers. (copy of coupon attached) This was well ahead of much of the country. In January of 1992 "Project Stealth: Sworn to Silence", a movement by Charley Morey, shows one effort made by an individual to educate the riders (copy attached). The Motorcycle Industry Council's "Less Sound=More Ground" made some inroads, but education alone is not effective.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and voice our thoughts on this bill. Please support this bill, we would appreciate your 'yes' vote.

Sincerely,  
Ramona Ehnes, President  
Great Falls Trail Bike Riders Association  
PO Box 602  
Great Falls, MT 59403



## Outdoors briefs

### *Bike riders advocate special mufflers*

The Great Falls Trail Bike Riders Association and two Great Falls cycle stores are encouraging trail bikers to buy special mufflers to reduce motorcycle noise.

"Without a doubt the most serious problem facing off-road motorcyclists is noise pollution," said Russ Ehnes, association president. "If we wish to continue using the trails we presently use we must avoid conflicts with other users. The best way we can do so are to ride responsibly, respect other users, and make sure our bikes are quiet."

A coupon Ehnes has prepared entitles motorcyclists to 20 percent discounts on Cobra Hush-Puppy mufflers at Sport City Cyclery and Steves Sport Center. The muffler normally retails for about \$105.

The muffler can reduce the noise of some motorcycles from over 100 decibels to 90 decibels or less, Ehnes said. It has a valve that provides back pressure at low RPM.

"If anything, they'll help the low-end power of the motor and they don't restrict the top-end power of the motor at all," Ehnes said of the mufflers.

Such mufflers do come on some trail bikes, but not on all types of motorcycles used by trail riders, Ehnes said. "We hope that eventually all bikes — competition or otherwise — will be quiet," he said.

The association meets at 7 p.m. Thursday in the basement of the Amigo Lounge, 1200 7th St. S. Ehnes said anyone wanting information about the association or a coupon for a quiet muffler can call him.

"We're doing that with the hopes that maybe people would hear about it and realize that we're serious about improving our image," Ehnes said.

Without a doubt the most serious problem facing off-road motorcyclists is **NOISE POLLUTION**. Through the efforts of groups like the Great Falls Trail Bike Riders Association and the Montana Trail Vehicle Association, other problems are being overcome. But noise is not receiving the attention it deserves. Forest users, including responsible trail riders, enjoy the peace and quiet of the mountains. They don't enjoy being disturbed by irresponsible riders on excessively noisy trail bikes. If we wish to continue using the trails we presently use we must avoid conflicts with other users. The best ways we can do so are to ride responsibly, respect other users, and make sure our bikes are QUIET.

Moto-cross bikes often make good trail bikes except for their mufflers. They don't have Forest Service approved spark arresters and are excessively noisy for trail riding. While add on spark arresters make the mufflers Forest Service legal they do nothing for their loud tone. However, there are new mufflers available that will satisfy Forest Service requirements, greatly reduce noise, and do not affect the performance of the motorcycle. In most cases the Cobra Hush-Puppy muffler actually increases the low to mid r.p.m. torque without hurting top end power.

In cooperation with Sport City Cyclery and Steves Sports Center, Great Falls Trail Bike Riders Association is offering a 20% discount coupon for Cobra Hush-Puppy mufflers. Hush-Puppy mufflers typically retail for about \$105 and are available for most makes and models. With the discount they run in the \$85-90 range. They bolt easily to stock muffler mounts. The discount applies only to the muffler and does not apply to other hardware or installation.

If the price sounds high try to imagine life without your favorite riding animal.

Great Falls Trail Riders Association is working to preserve your right to ride. Pass the word, QUIETLY!

For more info. about G.F.T.B.R.A. call Russ Ehnes at 452-8815 after 5pm. or 771-0222 days.

**HUSH-PUPPY**  
MUFFLERS

**20%** OFF SUGGESTED RETAIL

Redeemable at:

Sport City Cyclery 101 57th St. So. Great Falls, Mt. Ph. 727-8566	Steves Sport Center 4700 9th Ave. So. Great Falls, Mt. Ph. 727-8606
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Exp. Date 5/30/90

**D**irt bikes are too loud. In the case of trail riding, the sound carries far beyond the immediate location of the machines and offends others. No one wants the raucous concerto of our motors as background music for their Sunday afternoon activities. That image of dirt bikes as noisy and intrusive adversely affects our efforts to retain land on which to ride.

In the case of motocross, the noise level is detrimental to the participants' and spectators' hearing, causing discomfort over a single day's activities and permanent hearing loss over longer periods of time.

Obviously, there is some overlap of these problems.

Loud dirt bikes can affect the riders' hearing, and loud race bikes prevent tracks from being located within populated areas.

Stock car racing organizations have recognized and solved this problem. Their machines use quiet mufflers, and the quality of racing has not suffered. Viewers can talk with each other comfortably in the stands, and the announcer's voice can easily be heard over the motors. Races can be located well within city limits where it's easier to draw a large spectator crowd (you know—those people who pay the bills). It's a good idea from every angle!

I raced motocross in the late '60s and early '70s. We didn't use mufflers of any sort then, and when the AMA decided that they were going to require mufflers on motocross bikes, we were extremely upset. We knew for sure that they would lower the performance of our bikes, and we were certain that spectators wouldn't attend a motorsports event where the machines sounded like mopeds!

As we all know now, our fears were unfounded. History has proven us wrong. The performance of today's bikes exceeds our wildest dreams, and crowd attendance is

high at motorcycle events. The only problem is, the AMA took that first critical step 20 years ago and hasn't followed up on it since.

It's time for the next step in dirt riding's noise-control evolution.

What do we do about it? Equip bikes with effective silencers. The silencers must not adversely affect the power of the motors, and they must be as lightweight as their noisy predecessors. This program must create a "no-loss, all-gain" situation.

The technology exists today; such a muffler can be produced. Why hasn't it? Because there has been no motivation for manufacturers to

ers are forced to meet sound limits, the demand for such products will exist, and the manufacturers—both motorcycle and aftermarket exhaust—will have reason to build them.

The fact is, we are not even trying to be quiet right now. If we were, would we design motorcycle exhaust pipes that aim up toward our ears? Why not aim them down toward the ground, just like every other type of motor vehicle? If we tried, we could do it.

Starting right now, going into 1992, I intend to launch an intense, personal, three-year campaign to encourage silent riding: Project

Stealth. I like that concept a lot. It implies intelligence and cutting-edge technology, both attributes of wise design.

The "John Wayne" days are gone. No longer do our armed forces charge in, guns blazing, in a direct (and vulnerable) frontal attack. Nowadays we send in a flight of F-117As, take out an entire military installation

and head for home before the enemy even knows we're in town!

I think the stealth concept works well with dirt riding, too. Why noisily announce our presence to those who would have us exterminated? Why be obnoxious? Why not enjoy the sensations of riding off-road without emitting any noise at all? Does noise improve the quality of your riding experience?

If you agree, please join me in this effort. Let the manufacturers, the aftermarket silencer companies and the American Motorcyclist Association know how you feel. If you don't agree, voice your viewpoint here alongside mine. As always, your comments are welcome. Those that present their arguments (both pro and con) most effectively will be printed in our "Letters" section.

Most of all, thanks for your involvement!

—Charlie Morey



**I intend to launch an intense, personal, three-year campaign to encourage silent riding: Project Stealth.**

spend the money and effort on researching, designing, prototyping and producing such products. There has been no demand (aside from complaints by dirt-riding political activists) for quiet motorcycles from the riders.

An AMA motocross rule that insists on low sound levels, perhaps lowering them over a period of two or three years, would solve that. If rac-